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Security Council
Fifty-eighth year

Letter dated 30 January 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the communiqué issued on 20 January 2003 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Nicaragua (see annex) concerning the report of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States on the diversion of Nicaraguan arms to the United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia.

In this respect, and on behalf of my Government, I request you to arrange for the text of this letter and its annex to be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 66 (v), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Eduardo J. **Sevilla Somoza**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

03-23211 (E) 030203 030203

Annex to the letter dated 30 January 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Communiqué issued on 20 January 2003 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning the report of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States on the diversion of Nicaraguan arms to the United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia

1. The Government of Nicaragua thanks the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), César Gaviria Trujillo, and the Assistant Secretary General, Ambassador Luigi R. Einaudi, for the report submitted to the three countries, and extends special thanks to the team consisting of Ambassador Morris Busby, Christopher Hernández, Michael Sullivan and Jimena Duque.

2. The Government of Nicaragua particularly appreciates the spirit of the report, since the investigation requested from the Secretary General of OAS by the Governments of Colombia, Nicaragua and Panama, on the initiative of the President of Nicaragua, Mr. Enrique Bolaños Geyer, is helping to strengthen the foundations for the maintenance of peace and security in the region.

3. The report shows that the operation was planned outside Nicaragua, that both our country, and Panama and Colombia, were the victims of an activity by organized crime, and that this should motivate us to redouble our efforts with the international community to combat this phenomenon.

4. It is also indicated in the report, referring to Nicaragua, that "the diversion was made possible by negligent actions" and that "there are significant weaknesses in Nicaraguan law". We will work in cooperation with the States members of OAS to harmonize and standardize mechanisms for the effective implementation of the Inter-American Convention against Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials (CIFTA).

5. We are requesting cooperation and technical assistance from OAS in order to develop model national legislation which would incorporate the monitoring mechanisms established by the Convention and would serve as a basis for other States of the inter-American system.

6. At the beginning of the presidential term of President Bolaños, and in view of this inherited situation, we undertook the formulation of a draft law on monitoring, manufacture and transfers of weapons that would clearly establish the responsibilities of each of the State institutions, as well as the appropriate mechanisms. In December 2002, at the thirty-second session of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD-OAS), the Government of Nicaragua put forward an initiative for the formulation of regulations governing the brokerage of arms sales, which was unanimously approved by OAS.

7. During the 1990s, under the Presidency of Ms. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, Nicaragua spearheaded an intensive and unique disarmament process, and promoted a new model of democratic security at the regional level. Nicaragua is the Latin American country which has voluntarily destroyed the largest quantities of weapons, and it has no landmines in its arsenal. This has made it possible to initiate an exemplary process of modernization and professionalization of the Nicaraguan

army. We believe that this process should continue to be intensified at both national and regional levels.

8. It is important to announce, in this respect, that Nicaragua will continue to assume effective leadership in the area of arms limitation in the region, within the framework of a reasonable balance of forces, and for that reason we are carrying out phased initiatives and projects on this matter within the Central American Security Commission.

9. Nicaragua is willing to have an immediate visual inspection of the arms and ammunition inventory of the Nicaraguan national police and army, in the same spirit of openness and transparency which, since the 1990s, has made possible the provision of inventories to the United Nations, OAS and the Central American Integration System (SICA). We will promote mechanisms for full monitoring and verification at the regional level of the arms and ammunition inventories of countries and their transfers. The Ministries of the Interior and of Defence are being requested to provide a plan for a mechanism for the periodic monitoring and verification of weapons inventories.

10. The President of the Republic has designated an inter-agency investigatory commission, consisting of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, the Interior and Defence and the Attorney-General's Office, to consider and follow up on the OAS recommendations included in the report of the General Secretariat, and we will contact the other countries mentioned in the report (Colombia, Guatemala, Israel, Mexico and Panama) so that, within the framework of mutual cooperation in the face of international organized crime, we will seek formulas to enable us to combat transnational crime.

Managua, 20 January 2003